

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 511
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 4357

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG

PASS CAPETOWN IF APPLICABLE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, PINT, SA
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CONTACTS WITH BLACK LEADERS IN
SOUTH AFRICA

1. A MR. TED JENNINGS, WHO DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A PROFESSOR
OF THEOLOGY AT THE CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, TELEPHONED
THE EMBASSY LATEMAY 10 AND ASKED THAT A MESSAGE BE PASSED TO
AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG FROM SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK LEADER STEVE BIKO.

2. MR. JENNINGS SAID HE COULD NOT PERSONALLY COME TO THE
EMBASSY SINCE HE WAS SOON DEPARTING ATHENS. BY WAY OF
ESTABLISHING HIS CREDENTIALS, HOWEVER, JENNINGS EXPLAINED
THAT HE HAD JUST SPENT SOME TWO AND ONE-HALF MONTHS IN SOUTH
AFRICA WHERE HE HAD BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE
CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE, APPARENTLY WELL-KNOWN TO AMBASSADOR
YOUNG, WHICH WOULD VOUCH FOR HIM. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT
HE HAD WORKED IN YOUNG'S INITIAL CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN, BUT
THAT THE AMBASSADOR WOULD PROBABLY NOT REMEMBER HIM FROM
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THAT PERIOD.

3. JENNINGS SAID HE HAD DEVELOPED A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH
BLACK LEADERS STEVE BIKO AND ROBERT SOBOKWE (PAC) DURING HIS
STAY IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE SAID THAT BIKO, WITH WHOM HE HAD SPOKEN
DURING HIS LAST NIGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA, HAD ESPECIALLY ASKED
JENNINGS TO CARRY AN INFORMAL MESSAGE TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG.

BIKO REQUESTED THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG BE INFORMED THAT BLACK LEADERS IN GENERAL, AND HE SPECIFICALLY, WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG WHEN HE COMES TO SOUTH AFRICA. HOWEVER, BECAUSE "IDENTIFICATION" WITH AMERICANS WOULD BE HARMFUL TO ANY BLACK LEADER IN VIEW OF THE INTENSE RIVALRY AMONG BLACK NATIONALISTS, IT WAS RISKY FOR BIKO TO BE THE ONLY BLACK LEADER TO MEET WITH YOUNG. THEREFORE, BIKO COULD ONLY AGREE TO SEE AMBASSADOR YOUNG IF THE AMBASSADOR WOULD ALSO MAKE A WELL PUBLICIZED ATTEMPT TO SEE ANC LEADER MANDELLA, WHO IS CURRENTLY IMPRISONED ON ROBIN ISLAND. BIKO PREDICTED YOUNG WOULD BE REFUSED PERMISSION TO SEE MANDELLA, BUT FELT THE RESULTANT PUBLICITY WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT BIKO'S FUTURE POSITION. (BIKO, ACCORDING TO JENNINGS, HAD RECEIVED A USG TRAVEL GRANT WHICH THE BLACK LEADER HAD LATER BEEN OBLIGED TO DENOUNCE WHEN THE FACT OF ITS EXISTENCE APPEARED IN THE MEDIA, SINCE ACCEPTANCE OF THE GRANT WOULD DISCREDIT HIM AMONG HIS BLACK FOLLOWERS.)

4. JENNINGS SAID HE WAS SENDING A MORE DETAILED LETTER DIRECTLY TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG, BUT BECAUSE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S TRIP HOPED THE MESSAGE COULD BE RELAYED TO HIM MORE RAPIDLY BY THE EMBASSY.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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